

WASHINGTON - Congressman Steny Hoyer announced today that the House of Representatives committed to funding two important programs that will benefit Prince George's County this year in the fiscal year 2005 Commerce, Justice, State (CJS) Appropriations bill passed today in the House of Representatives.

"The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program has provided law enforcement officials serving our region with the real time equipment, technology, and personnel that they need to keep their departments running safely and efficiently," said Congressman Hoyer. "I am pleased that the House of Representatives has committed to provide funding for the Prince George's County Police Department so that they can better update the technology they rely on when away from their Departments and desks.

"Providing adequate support to law enforcement officials while we wage a war on terrorism is imperative, especially for those programs that are related to community involvement. The Center for Criminal Justice Technology has been providing critical services to the criminal justice community and to deal with the substantial new challenges faced by the local and state law enforcement communities.

"We must invest in these programs that are working to create stronger relationships between our neighborhoods and local law enforcement to help make our police officers more effective and our communities safer. I will work to ensure that funding for these programs is included in the final legislation that will be signed into law later this year," concluded Hoyer.

The following two programs were included in the House passed fiscal year 2005 CJS Appropriations Bill but have not yet been allocated a specific amount of funding. By including the projects in the bill, the House of Representatives committed to providing funding for both of the projects, and will determine the actual funding allocation after the Senate passes the fiscal year 2005 CJS Appropriations bill and the differences in the two bills are worked out in a Conference Committee.

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Law Enforcement Technology Program Grant for the Prince George's Police Department

Congressman Hoyer has been a long-time supporter of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program since its inception in 1994 and has expressed deep concern for the Bush Administration's budget proposal which guts funding for the COPS program. The Bush

Administration's budget request for Fiscal Year 2005 provides only \$44 million for the COPS program, \$712 million, or 87%, below the FY04 level, and also calls for eliminating the Universal Hiring Program.

At the request of Congressman Hoyer, the House of Representatives committed to provide funding for the Prince George's County Police Department so that they can purchase high-speed local area networks (LANs) to update the software contained in their mobile data computers. Currently, every software update must be called into the installation site and is manually installed. Each update takes approximately six to eight weeks to complete and results in vehicle and officer downtime. This non-productive time affects the Department's ability to respond to calls for service in a timely fashion and reduces the amount of time available for community policing. Federal funding to help the Department automatically download the necessary updated software would provide an efficient means to update a critical tool used by the Police Department to make the community safer.

Center for Criminal Justice Technology (within the COPS Program)

The Center for Criminal Justice Technology within the COPS Technology Program or Crime Identification Technology Program is a non-profit center of excellence that provides unbiased technology expertise to the criminal justice community. The Center was created as a partnership between the University of Maryland, College Park, and Mitretek Systems. The Center will endeavor to solve technological problems faced by law enforcement in the States of Maryland and Virginia by setting up laboratories for the criminal justice community that will provide systems engineering, standards engineering, product evaluation and concept development.

Congressman Steny Hoyer successfully secured \$9 million in federal funds for the Center for Criminal Justice Technology over the past four fiscal years and over 13 new projects have been initiated. At the request of Congressman Hoyer, the House of Representatives agreed to fund this program again in fiscal year 2005.

The Senate must now pass the fiscal year 2005 CJS Appropriations bill and then the differences in the two bills must be worked out in a Conference Committee before the bill may become law.

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